

ABSTRACT

MUSICAL EDUCATION IN THE CONSERVATORIUM OF KOLOZSVÁR BETWEEN 1819–1869

The beginning of the 19th century witnessed the founding and development of the main musical institutions in Europe. Organised with multiple aims, the so-called Musical Societies (Ger. *Musik-Verein*, It. *Conservatorio*) were established throughout Europe, enhancing thus the musical life of its different cultural regions. Assuming both artistic and philanthropical goals, in their first decades of existence all the institutions opened their schools.

Among the Central and Eastern-European musical institutions of the first half of the 19th century, the Musical Society (Hung. *Muzsikai Egyesület*, later *Muzsikai Conservatorium*) of the Transylvanian town, Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, today Cluj-Napoca) is one of the oldest establishments.

Its model was probably one of the newly founded Western institutions. Following the affluent example of the Paris Conservatoire established in 1795, musical societies were initiated in the main cities of the Habsburg Empire, in Vienna (1812), Graz (1815) or Innsbruck (1818).

Inspired probably by a closer antecedent, the short-lived Musical Society of Pest (1818–1822), the Transylvanian organisation was created in 1819. Its noble goals and achievements were not unique in the history of the Hungarian musical culture, they were soon followed by associations that undertook musical education in towns like Arad (1832), Pest-Buda (1836), Hermannstadt (1839, today: Sibiu), Lugos (1852, today: Lugoj), or Debrecen (1862).

Particularities of the Musical Society in Kolozsvár were all linked to its teaching attributions. Whilst similar institutions built up firstly an artistic activity (rehearsals, concerts) and started teaching only years later, this association was founded with the specific goal of musical education. Within a month after the opening meeting in June 1819, public musical classes started in Kolozsvár. For the first time in the history of the region, possibility to study music was granted to all children over 10 years and young adults, without any discrimination on social, gender or religious grounds, and and for the most talented ones, free of charge. This meant that girls could attend public singing classes, whereas boys could chose between vocal training, violin or wind instruments.

Although the Musical Society's official language was Hungarian, its minutes of meetings and all formal documents being recorded in Hungarian, between 1819–1869 all its artistic leaders were Austrian-born musicians.

Anton Polz, Dominic Grosspeter and Georg Ruzitska knew and used the normative pedagogical works of their times and also developed different musical textbooks (*Singing method*, *Violin method*, *Organ method*, *Thorough Bass*). Preserved in printed or manuscript forms, these documents along with the short musical compositions dedicated to the students of the Conservatorium show the level and organisation of the musical classes.

The first decades in the history of the Musical Society and its school cannot be viewed as an overall success and a series of uninterrupted developments. Struggling for financial aid and seeking national acknowledgement, the institute handed in a petition to the Transylvanian Parliament in 1842, with the reason that its Conservatorium functions as the preparatory school for the artists of the theatre. Although an impressive sum was granted for this purpose, the association was only later financially supported by the Town's Council. In this prosperous period, between 1836–1848 students studied for three years in the Conservatorium. In 1843, at the proposal of director Ruzitska, the instruction of female vocal soloists started.

After the revolutionary events of 1848–1849, the Conservatorium's teaching activities were significantly reduced. Still, courses were retaken in 1859, introducing new string instruments (viola, violoncello and bass), keyboard instruments (organ, piano) and advanced music theory studies (composition, thorough bass).

Highlighting the various circumstances in which the establishment undertook musical education, the volume displays the results of archival research combined with information from the local journals, personal memoirs, letters. Chronology of the main events of the Musical Society and its Conservatorium, prominent teachers and students, day-to-day activities, exams and and concerts, musical and didactic methods, relationship with the local theatre, educational institutions, churches – all gathered to present the history of Transylvania's eldest music school.